

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10278 01 OF 02 111350Z  
ACTION SS-25

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P R 111033Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4817  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY  
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10278

EXDIS

DEPT PASS AID FOR WHEELER

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: EAID, IS, JO, PBOR  
SUBJECT: MAQARIN DAM NEXT STEPS-DISCUSSIONS  
WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS

REFS: (A) AMMAN 06463, (B) STATE 197942

1. SUMMARY: MEETINGS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS ON MAQARIN DAM PROJECT INCLUDED DISCUSSIONS ON PROJECT STATUS AND OUTSTANDING RIPARIAN ISSUES. WITH MOSHE ALON ON LEAVE, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO PIN DOWN FIRM GOI POSITION ON WATER AVAILABILITY, DIVERSION WEIR AND WEST BANK STUDY. KANTOR MOST POSITIVE IN USING HARZA AS INTERMEDIARY ON WEIR AND WEST BANK STUDY. MFA OFFICIALS (BELOW ALON LEVEL) REFLECTED PAST HARD-LINE ON DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS AND NEED FOR SOME FORM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES. EMBASSY WILL TRY TO OBTAIN MORE DEFINITIVE GOI POSITION UPON ALON'S RETURN. PARA 7 PROPOSES NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 8 AND 9, TWO MEETINGS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS  
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 10278 01 OF 02 111350Z

CIALS DISCUSSED CURRENT STATUS OF MAQARIN DAM PROJECT AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES RELATING TO RIPARIAN RIGHTS. ON AUGUST 8, TAUBENBLATT, DIRECTOR AID/NE/PD, MET WITH MENACHEM KANTOR, ISRAELI TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE ON MAQARIN DAM PROJECT, AND ON AUGUST 9 ACTING DCM HAR AND TAUBENBLATT MET WITH OFFICIALS OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ECONOMIC DIRECTOR GAD ELRON, ETZION

OF PLANNING DIVISION AND SABLE OF LEGAL ADVISOR'S OFFICE. TAUBENBLATT BRIEFED KANTOR AND MFA OFFICIALS ON CURRENT STATUS OF MAQARIN DAM FEASIBILITY STUDY INCLUDING TECHNICAL CONCLUSIONS REACHED AT APRIL DONORS MEETING, I.E., NEED TO CONSIDER IMPACT OF GEOLOGY ON DAM HEIGHT, NEW MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER REQUIREMENTS FOR JORDAN AND POSSIBLE SYRIAN WATER USED IN UPPER YARMOUK REGION. ALSO DISCUSSED TIMETABLE FOR FINAL FEASIBILITY STUDY REVIEW (I.E., APRIL/MAY 1979) INCLUDING FORTHCOMING WORLD BANK APPRAISAL.

3. THE FOLLOWING OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON MARQARIN DAM PROJECT WERE DISCUSSED WITH KANTOR AND MFA OFFICIALS:

(A) WATER AVAILABILITY/FLOW. TAUBENBLATT EMPHASIZED THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE GOJ ON LIMITATIONS OF MAQARIN DAM WATER DUE TO POSSIBLE SYRIAN USES AND GOJ MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL REQUIREMENTS WHICH ARE GROWING RAPIDLY. TAUBENBLATT NOTED THAT GOJ STILL ACCEPTS THE JOHNSTON PLAN 25 MCM FROM THE YARMOUK RIVER; HOWEVER, GOJ, DID NOT ACCEPT THE UP TO 40 MCM --25 MCM NOW AND 15 MCM LATER-- AS WAS PROPOSED BY THE ISRAELIS LAST NOVEMBER. KANTOR STATED THAT HE FELT THAT THE WATER/FLOW FOR THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE IS NOT A MAJOR PROBLEM AND COULD BE SOLVED QUICKLY ONCE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE. ON THE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 10278 01 OF 02 111350Z

OTHER HAND, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS STATED THAT THERE WAS A FIRM NEED TO PIN DOWN WATER AVAILABILITY/FLOW FOR THE TRIANGLE WHICH MUST BE REFLECTED IN SOME FORM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

B. DIVERSION WEIR. TAUBENBLATT EXPRESSED JORDANIAN DESIRE TO PROCEED EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH CONSTRUCTION OF DIVERSION WEIR BUT NEEDED THE GOI AGREEMENT. HE SUGGESTED TO GOI OFFICIALS THAT HARZA BE USED AS THE INTERMEDIARY TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS ON WEIR DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION. HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT BOTH PARTIES STAND TO GAIN THROUGH MORE EFFICIENT USE OF WATER DURING THE DRY SUMMER MONTHS, IF SUCH A WEIR COULD BE CONSTRUCTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KANTOR THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA AND SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS TAHAL (ISRAELI WATER PLANNING AGENCY) COULD MEET WITH HARZA TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF WEIR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION. HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS THAT AN OFFICIAL OF THE GOJ BE CLOSE BY TO INSTRUCT HARZA AS FINAL DECISIONS ARE REACHED ON THE DIVERSION WEIR. KANTOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DROP INLET WOULD NOT BE BENEFICIAL TO EITHER PARTY. IN SUB-

SEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH MFA OFFICIALS, THEY REFLECTED EARLIER GOI POSITION THAT DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE THE WIER CONSTRUCTION WENT FORWARD. THE DIFFERENCE IN POSITIONS BETWEEN KANTOR AND MFA REPRESENTATIVES WILL HAVE TO BE SORTED OUT BY MOSHE ALON UPON HIS RETURN IN LATE AUGUST.

C. WEST BANK STUDY. IN CONTEXT BOTH MEETINGS, GOI OFFICIALS AGAIN EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT WEST BANK WATER AVAILABILITY. TAUBENBLATT NOTED THAT EVEN WITH A ONE-STAGE MAQARIN DAM CONSTRUCTION, THAT DOWNSTREAM YARMOUK WATER WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE FOR WEST BANK. AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, MAQARIN WILL NOT PREEMPT ALL THE DOWNSTREAM  
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 10278 01 OF 02 111350Z

WATER FLOW, FOR EXAMPLE, SPILLS, SIDE WADIS AND THE MAJOR FLOW FROM THE WADI RAQQAD. MFA OFFICIALS AGAIN EXPRESSED CONCERNS THAT WEST BANK CANNOT BE IGNORED AND THERE IS NEED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF WATER NEEDS IN THAT AREA. QUESTION OF WEST BANK STUDY CAME UP AND TAUBENBLATT SUGGESTED THAT AID UNDERTAKE AND FINANCE SUCH A WEST BANK STUDY, WITH STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BY HARZA. KANTOR WAS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO SUCH AN APPROACH AND SUGGESTED THAT

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 10278 02 OF 02 111321Z  
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
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INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 10278

EXDIS

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PERHAPS US FIRM CAN JOINTLY CARRY OUT STUDY WITH TAHAL. TAUBENBLATT NOTED THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE SINCE IT COULD RAISE QUESTION IN JORDANIAN MINDS AS TO OBJECTIVITY, AND THE STUDY WAS INTENDED FOR USE OF BOTH PARTIES. TAUBENBLATT SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE IF TAHAL PLAYED A COORDINATING ROLE THAT WOULD PROVIDE INFORMATION TO HARZA. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MFA OFFICIALS, THEY INDICATED THAT SUGGESTED APPROACH ON WEST BANK STUDY MAY BE WORKABLE BUT THAT THEY WISH TO THINK ABOUT IT FURTHER. DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSION WITH KANTOR ON WEST BANK WATER, TAUBENBLATT MENTIONED NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT 100 MCM AVAILABILITY FROM LAKE TIBERIUS IN ADDITION TO WEST BANK GROUND WATER AND THE YARMOUK RIVER. KANTOR NOTED THAT 100 MCM FIGURE MOST UNREALISTIC IN THE PRESENT DAY CONTEXT SINCE THE JOHNSTON PLAN WAS BASED ON ESTIMATE THAT ISRAELI WATER RESOURCE CAPACITY FROM ALL SOURCES WOULD BE ABOUT 2.2 BILLION MCM. IN CONTRAST, HE SAID THAT ISRAELI PRESENT ESTIMATES ABOUT 1.6 -1.7 BILLION MCM.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 10278 02 OF 02 111321Z

4. KANTOR INDICATED THAT HE PLANNED TO DISCUSS WITH MOSHE ALON AND PERHAPS FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN APPROACHED TO MAQARIN ISSUES AND IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT USE OF HARZA IN BOTH DIVERSION WEIR AND WEST BANK STUDY AS PROPOSED ABOVE. ON AUGUST 10, KANTOR CALLED TAUBENBLATT AND INDICATED HE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH ISRAELI WATER COMMISSIONER MEIR BEN MEIR WHO ALSO PREPARED TO SUPPORT KANTOR POSITION. ON THE OTHER HAND, IMPRESSION RECEIVED FROM DISCUSSION WITH MFA OFFICIALS WAS OF A MORE RIGID APPROACH WITH CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS AND NEED FOR SOME FORM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL THAT WOULD REFLECT UNDERSTANDINGS.

5. IN COURSE CONVERSATION MFA OFFICIALS, SABLE EXPRESSED NEED FOR IBRD IN ITS APPRAISAL ROLE TO CONSULT WITH ISRAEL SO THAT BANK ALSO UNDERSTANDS OUTSTANDING WATER RIGHTS ISSUE. SABLE STATED THAT HE FELT THAT GOI DESIRE FOR BANK CONSULTATION SHOULD BE EXPRESSED IN WRITING TO THE BANK. TAUBENBLATT NOTED THAT AID HAS KEPT SENIOR OFFICIALS OF WORLD BANK INFORMED RE US GOOD OFFICES ROLE ON MAQARIN DAM WATER RIGHTS AND THAT BANK HAS INDICATED THAT IT LOOKS TO US TO DEAL WITH THIS MATTER AS WAS AGREED BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL. TAUBENBLATT SUGGESTED

THAT HE WILL DISCUSS THIS MATTER UPON RETURNING TO WASHINGTON AND WILL ADVISE FURTHER RE US AND IBRD VIEWS THIS MATTER.

6. COMMENTS: OVERALL, WE FEEL THAT KANTOR PRESENTED POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THREE REMAINING ISSUES, I.E. WATER AVAILABILITY. DIVERSION WEIR AND WEST BANK STUDY. HOWEVER, MFA DISCUSSIONS REFLECT PREVIOUS GOI HARD-LINE POSITION ON DIRECT TECHNICAL TALKS BEING SINE QUA NON FOR REACHING AGREEMENT. WE WILL TRY TO CLARIFY WHICH IS APPROVED GOI  
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 10278 02 OF 02 111321Z

POLICY WHEN ALON RETURNS. WE ALSO FEEL THAT IT NECESSARY TO CONTINUE TO KEEP GOI APPRISED OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS ON THE PROJECT INCLUDING US INTENTIONS IN PROCEEDING WITH PROJECT FINANCING. IN DISCUSSIONS, MFA OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PROJECT WAS PROCEEDING AND GOI CONCERNS WERE NOT BEING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. WE INDICATED THAT WE AND THE GOJ WERE VERY MUCH AWARE OF GOI CONCERNS AND THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING WAS TO AGAIN UPDATE THE CURRENT PROJECT STATUS AS WELL AS THE POSITIONS BY BOTH PARTIES ON THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

7. NEXT STEPS. ON BASIS DISCUSSIONS IN AMMAN AND TEL AVIV, TAUBENBLATT AND EMBASSY TEL AVIV SEE NEXT STEPS AS FOLLOWS:

A. UPON RETURN, TAUBENBLATT WILL REVISE SCOPE OF WORK OF WEST BANK STUDY AS DISCUSSED IN AMMAN ON AUGUST 5 AND 6 AND WILL FORWARD FOR AMMAN AND TEL AVIV COMMENT. THEREAFTER, SCOPE WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN. IF GOJ CONCURS IN SCOPE OF WEST BANK STUDY, IT SHOULD THEN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO GOI FOR REVIEW AND COMMENTS.

B. LEGAL MEMORANDUM ON IMPLICATIONS OF HOUSE AND SENATE REPORT PRUSUANT TO MAQARIN DAM FINANCING SHOULD BE FINALIZED AND FORWARDED TO AMMAN PER PARA 6, REF A. WE FEEL THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT GOJ BE APPRISED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE OF CONGRESSIONAL REPORTS ON MAQARIN AND IMPLICATIONS OF LANGUAGE "FIRM UNDERSTANDING WITH AND BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN."

C. TEL AVIV WILL FOLLOW UP WITH MOSHE ALON AND MENACHEM KANTOR UPON ALON'S RETURN TO OBTAIN FIRM GOI POSITON ON DIVERSION WEIR AND WEST BANK STUDY AS DISCUSSED ABOVE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 10278 02 OF 02 111321Z

D. UPON RECEIPT, COPY OF HARZA'S FEASIBILITY STUDY  
INCLUDING APPENDICES WILL BE TRANSMITTED TO  
GOI.

8. TAUBENBLATT WILL BRIEF DEPARTMENT AND AID OFFICIALS  
ON AMMAN AND TEL AVIV MEETINGS UPON RETURN (ETA AUGUST 14).  
LEWIS

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